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16 October 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Science and Technology

SUBJECT: Sequence of Events Leading to the U-2
Test Flight of Color Film by SAC at
Barksdale AFB, 12 October 1963

1. On 2 September 1963 NRO was notified of the near availability of color film and modified camera for employment in the U-2, possibly over Cuba. NRO was also advised of the flight testing of the film, which was to occur in several days. On 3 September this information was passed to Colonel Steakley in JRC, who issued the same day instructions to SAC at Barksdale, informing them of the impending availability of color film and that a test would be required prior to overflight.

2. On 6 September 1963 the flight test with the U-2 utilizing color film was accomplished -- in the San Francisco Bay area. On 19 September the finished product was delivered to the Agency and a copy forwarded to [REDACTED] in NRO. It is understood that [REDACTED] did see this material prior to his departure [REDACTED] the following Monday. The aircraft arrived in place at Barksdale on or about 11 October. Two 500 foot rolls of color film were delivered prior to this date. On 12 October SAC flew a test mission utilizing one roll of the color film over Memphis, Tennessee. Seventy-five feet of this roll was delivered to Eastman Kodak for processing. The reason the entire roll was not delivered was that Eastman Kodak is presently using an old-fashioned B-5 type processor soon to be superseded by a new processor, available probably within ten days.

3. Evaluation of the color film test run in the San Francisco Bay area is made by Mr. Ed Green at Eastman Kodak in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] (attached). Notice in paragraph 2 of [REDACTED] that there was

NRO and USAF review(s) completed.

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some predominance of blue in the test material. A recommendation is made for a different filter to improve the color balance. Prior to the test run at Barksdale on 12 October, recommendations were received concerning the filter material to enhance the quality of the color balance. It was this cable, along with possible confusion existing between NRO and JRC, which prompted the additional test flight at Barksdale, incorporating the new recommended filter materials.

4. Analysis of the flight test run by SAC at Barksdale does indicate that the color film tested on 12 October is, in fact, superior in quality to that initially obtained on 6 September. Eastman Kodak representatives were present at Barksdale and assisted in the SAC color film tests.

CONCLUSIONS:

5. It appears that the reason for SAC performing the color tests over Tennessee instead of flying the first mission over Cuba was due to misunderstanding among NRO, JRC, and SAC at Barksdale -- and possibly Eastman Kodak. It is unfortunate that we are unable to obtain the specific instructions from JRC to SAC at Barksdale concerning the employment of the color film which they received initially.

6. For your information at the present time there are two 500 feet color rolls and two 1800 feet color rolls on hand now at Barksdale. Present indications are that SAC intends to employ the color film tomorrow over Cuba.

(Signed by [Redacted])

JAMES A. CUNNINGHAM, JR.
Acting Assistant Director
(Special Activities)

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